

Hello Latin America & Canada!

Check out *your* website at: <http://tricare15.army.mil>



- Reminder About CONUS Medical Appointments and Follow-Ups
- Region 15 Spring 2002 Planned for 23/24 April 2002 in Miami
- Expired ID Cards Cause TRICARE Claims to be Denied
- International SOS Is Planning Their Next Visit To Panama And El Salvador In March 2002
- Nutrient Essentials: Be Sure And Read This Month's Wellness Information Article!

POCs: Remember To Send A Copy Of Orders With Each New Enrollment Form!

Were You Advised To Follow-Up After a CONUS Medical Appointment?

After your CONUS medical appointment be sure to communicate with either SOS, Debra or Diane for additional appointments such as follow-ups, Physical Therapy, or further specialty care ASAP! We can't help you with follow-up appointments if we don't know about them!

TRICARE Region 15 Spring 2002 Conference Planning

The Region 15 Spring 2002 Remote Latin America Conference is set for Tuesday/Wednesday, 23 and 24 April 2002 in Miami. Monday the 22nd will be a travel day. As requested through your 2001 Conference Critiques, the sessions will be provided for the entire group instead of breakout sessions.

We are required to use the Army's Lodging Success Program for hotel accommodations. We will be at the same hotel as last year, the Windham Airport Miami Hotel.

We sent out requests for RSVPs two weeks ago and received a great response; 61 people in all. If you didn't get the request for RSVP or haven't had time to respond please give Karen Coleman a call at our toll free number, or email her at tricare15@se.amedd.army.mil. If your situation changes, send Karen an update ASAP. Online registration will be available in the very near future via our website.

The following is a series of excerpts from an article concerning rejected TRICARE claims caused because of expired military ID cards. While this article specifically discusses Medicare eligible retirees, the situation also affects active duty family members serving in areas where they do not use or even carry their military ID cards. Our advice is to dust off your military ID card and be prepared to renew them before they expire.

Expired ID Cards Bounce TFL Claims By Tom Philpott

"Military elderly and TRICARE officials are struggling with two new challenges that suggest a rocky start for TRICARE for Life, the military's new supplemental insurance plan for 1.6 million Medicare-eligible beneficiaries.

Officials learned in late January that 160,000 elderly beneficiaries have had TFL claims rejected because their military identification cards are expired . . .

The large number suggests that a lot of TFL beneficiaries don't use their IDs or that TFL information packets were mailed to many persons no longer eligible for TRICARE. It also was learned that TFL beneficiaries with questions about claims have difficulty contacting the primary claims processor . . .

Many of those rejected claims are still unsettled, though the data glitch itself has been solved, officials said. TFL also has rejected a lot of claims because their records show the beneficiary has other health insurance. After Medicare pays its share, other health insurance plans are billed and TFL becomes third payer. Problems can arise if TFL doesn't know whether other health insurance has been dropped or retained . . ."

WPS has new phone numbers for the beneficiary lines in Customer Service for TRICARE Overseas: 608.301.2310 replaces 224 2727, and, 608.301.2311 replaces 224 2728

Protect yourself against health fraud

Americans spend billions of dollars each year on products or services that claim everything from "losing weight while you sleep" to "no more arthritic pain." Easy remedies are hard to resist, but many don't always deliver on their promises. Some can be harmful.

Health fraud means promoting, for financial gain, a health remedy that doesn't work -- or hasn't yet been proven to work. Health fraud has grown significantly in the past several decades. Why such growth? People today take more personal responsibility for staying healthy. That interest has launched a huge demand for products and services that promote health.

What are the consequences? Health fraud takes advantage of consumers and carries significant economic and health risks including:

False hopes. Unsound nutrition advice, products or services won't prevent or cure disease. For the best advice, contact your physician and a dietetics professional such as a registered dietitian.

A substitute for reliable health care. Proper health care can be delayed if you follow bad advice. You may lose something you can't retrieve -- time for effective treatment.

Unneeded expense. Even under the best of circumstances, some products and services simply don't work. Why waste your hard-earned money on something that has no effect?

Potential harm. Unsound nutrition advice, products or services can put your health at risk. Large doses of some vitamins and minerals, in the form of dietary supplements, can have harmful side effects. For example, excessive vitamin K is risky if you take blood-thinning drugs. And excessive amounts of vitamin A during pregnancy increase the chances of birth defects.

What can you do? Below are some tips that can help you in identifying health fraud and where you can go for sound nutrition information.

Do your homework. Find out more before you purchase a nutrition product, treatment or service.

Seek advice from reliable sources. It's not easy to distinguish nutrition facts from misinformation. Contact a credible nutrition source such as a dietetics professional.

Report nutrition fraud. If you suspect that a statement, product or service is false, discuss it with the appropriate government agency or file a complaint.

The Federal Trade Commission and the Food and Drug Administration have produced a brochure, *'Miracle' Health Claims: Add a Dose of Skepticism*, to help consumers understand the consequences of and learn how to identify health fraud.

You may view the brochure online at www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/health/frdheal.html

For a copy of the brochure, call 877/382-4357 or write to:

Consumer Response Center
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Room H 130
Washington, D.C. 20580-0001

Ten Red Flags of "Junk Science"

Did you just hear about a new "quick-fix" diet?

Before you jump to conclusions, check it out.

Any combination of these signs should send up a red flag of suspicion.

Recommendations that promise a quick fix

Dire warnings of danger from a single product or regimen

Claims that sound too good to be true

Simplistic conclusions drawn from a complex study

Recommendations based on a single study

Statements refuted by reputable scientific organizations

Lists of "good" and "bad" foods

Recommendations made to help sell a product.

Recommendations based on studies not peer reviewed

Recommendations from studies that ignore differences among individuals or groups

For information on becoming an RD or DTR, visit

www.eatright.org/careers.html

To [find an RD](#) in your area, search ADA's Nationwide Nutrition Network. If you're not ready to see an RD yet, you may want to check out ADA's Consumer Nutrition Information Line (800/366-1655) for timely, practical food and nutrition information